



## Kentucky Certification Policy Spoken Language Interpreters

Effective October 1, 2004

The Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts has established a statewide Kentucky Certification Policy for Spoken Language Interpreters' services to the Court of Justice. The Spoken Language Staff and Freelance Interpreter shall sign, date and have notarized receipt and acceptance of the Kentucky Certification Policy, which shall be kept on file at the AOC Court Interpreting Services Division. Refusal to accept or adhere to the Kentucky Certification Policy shall be grounds for disciplinary action for Staff Interpreters, and the Freelance Interpreter's removal from the AOC Directory whereby Freelance Interpreter will no longer be permitted to interpret for the Court of Justice.

The Kentucky Court of Justice, as of October 1, 2004, will require all spoken language court interpreters to successfully complete the certification process. To be considered a **Qualified Level I Interpreter**, you must:

- Pass a criminal history check;
- Successfully pass the Kentucky English Written Test;
- Completed a two-day orientation workshop; and,
- Meet the required total score standard of the Kentucky Oral Test.

In addition to these steps, in order to become a **Certified Interpreter** the interpreter must also successfully pass the Kentucky Oral Test, or have passed an AOC approved equivalent oral test. An interpreter will no longer be allowed to interpret until he/she has at least taken the steps to become a **Qualified Level I Interpreter**.

Interpreters will further be required to meet the continuing education and court observation requirements as noted in the Amendments to the Rules of Administrative Procedure, Part IX, Procedures for Appointment of Interpreters (AP Part IX). Freelance Interpreters will be required to annually: (1) have an annual criminal background check; and, (2) update their personal information. The criminal background check materials will be provided by the AOC.

### **Criminal Background Check:**

Both the Interpreter Certification REQUEST FORM for a criminal history report and the Criminal and Civil Information Sheet will be used by the AOC to determine whether or not an interpreter applicant is eligible to work as a court interpreter. The AOC will mail the applicant the results of his/her criminal history report. If the interpreter applicant fails the criminal records check, the candidate will not be allowed to interpret for the state court system, the AOC, nor to reapply to the AOC for the interpreter certification process.

### **English Written Test**

The English Written Test will consist of two parts: "Part 1. General English Language Vocabulary," and "Part 2. Court Related Terms and Usage." The test will examine the interpreter candidate's general knowledge of the English language and court terms and procedures. This test is an English proficiency exam. The question format throughout the test will be multiple choice. In order to pass the written test, the candidate must score at least a 70% on both Parts 1 and 2. If the interpreter candidate does not pass the test, he/she must wait one (1) year before retaking the exam. Under no circumstance will he/she be permitted to segregate the written test process.

Interpreter Candidates who have not passed the Kentucky English Written Test after the third time will be removed from the AOC Interpreter database. They will not be able to apply for the certification process again.

Interpreter Candidates who have successfully passed a written test that meets the AOC's standards, the candidate will be permitted to take the Orientation Workshop.

### **Orientation Workshop**

If the interpreter candidate passes the Kentucky English Written Test, he/she will be required to complete a two-day workshop. The workshop will present materials concerning the following areas: (1) appropriate modes of interpreting to be used in the courts; (2) ethics and responsibilities of court interpreters; (3) basic descriptions of the KCOJ and AOC; (4) various procedures for improving memory and interpreting skills; and, (5) a discussion about the oral test. An interpreter will only be required to take this once. The AOC will provide the candidate with materials for the workshop. Upon completion of the workshop, the candidate will become classified as a Qualified Level I Court Interpreter, and will be placed into the AOC Interpreter Directory.

Interpreter Candidates who have passed the Kentucky English Written Test have one (1) year to take the Orientation Workshop, or the next available time the workshop is scheduled.

### **Oral Test**

After completing the workshop the qualified interpreter will be given an opportunity to take the Oral test. The exam is essentially a language proficiency test, which is an oral test designed to determine whether the interpreter has the minimum language knowledge and interpreting skills in both English and the other language known. It consists of three (3) parts that specifically test the three (3) modes of interpreting in the court: simultaneous interpreting, consecutive interpreting, and sight translating. The interpreter is required to score at least a 70% in each of the three parts in order to pass the exam. Upon passing the oral test, he/she shall be reclassified as a Certified Interpreter.

Qualified Level I Spoken Language Interpreters shall be required to take the Kentucky Oral Test within one (1) year of completing the Orientation Workshop, or the next time the oral test is available.

If the interpreter's first total score on the Kentucky Oral Test is between 59.9% and 50%, then the interpreter will be reclassified as **provisional** Qualified Level I. The **provisional** Qualified Level I interpreter shall have one (1) year to retake the Kentucky Oral Test. If the interpreter's total score on the Kentucky Oral Test is below 50%, then the interpreter shall be removed from the AOC Interpreter Directory, shall no longer be allowed to interpret for the Court of Justice, and shall have only two (2) more opportunity to take the Kentucky Oral Test to score at least 60% on the total score.

Upon second application for those who first had a total test score between 59.9% and 50%, if the interpreter receives a total score of at least 60%, then the interpreter shall be reclassified as Qualified Level I interpreter. If the interpreter fails to receive a total score of at least 60% on the Kentucky Oral Test upon second application, then the interpreter will be declassified as Qualified Level II, and shall be removed from the AOC Directory. The interpreter will only be allowed to take the Kentucky Oral Test a total of three (3) times in an effort to achieve at least a total score of 60%. If an interpreter does not accomplish this task, then he or she shall no longer interpret for the Court of Justice. The third attempt must be undertaken within one (1) year of the second attempt, or the next available time the Oral test is offered not to exceed a period of one (1) year. This step only applies to those languages that have two (2) or more versions of the Oral Test.

Each version of the Oral Test may only be taken twice by an interpreter, and it can only be given the second time a year from the date first taken.

Qualified Level I Interpreters who have successfully passed an oral test that meets the AOC's standards will be reclassified as a Certified Interpreter.

### **Continuing Education**

The AOC shall require both certified and qualified interpreters to complete twenty (20) hours of continuing education units (CEUs), or in other words twenty (20) clock hours of continuing education, for each three (3) year compliance period. Each clock hour of activity shall be counted as one CEU. CEUs must be approved by AOC. The CEUs can be earned by attending courses, workshops, lectures, or other activity that have topics which are relevant to court interpreting, and at which attendance is monitored and verifiable. An interpreter can also receive CEUs for instructing, training, or presenting at a pre-approved activity. The AOC shall require verification of attendance or participation through the completion of the AOC Continuing Education Form.

### **Court Observation or Work Hours**

The AOC shall require both certified and qualified interpreters to complete twenty-four (24) hours of court observation or court interpreting work hours for each three (3) years compliance period. The AOC would prefer that the observation hours be completed for those cases in which an interpreter is present, but if this is not possible then the AOC will approve those observation times for cases without an interpreter. The AOC shall require verification of court observation hours through the completion of the AOC Court Observation Form. Court Interpreting Hours shall be verified by the AOC using the AOC-INT-01 Form, Statement of Interpreting Services.